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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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"The Aims, Scope, and Methods of a University Course in Public School Administration" was the topic discussed last March at the annual

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meeting of the National Society of College Teachers of Education at Indianapolis. The papers had been printed, as usual, in advance of the meeting, and had been distributed to the members of the society. The papers, especially the principal paper by Superintendent Spaulding, of Newton, Mass., had been written with unusual care, and are likely to have a permanent and favorable influence on the work of university departments of education in training supervisory officers—an important phase of the work not yet well developed, and greatly in need of development. It was accordingly expected that the papers would call forth thoughtful and vigorous discussion of the views expressed by the writers and the procedure recommended by them. Some pointed questions were indeed asked, and much discussion ensued. Unfortunately, however, too much time was consumed in a fruitless criticism of the alleged pessimism of Superintendent Spaulding's paper, and the "vagueness" and emptiness of his ideal of "universal education" as the fundamental end to be achieved through good administration (this last, together with Dr. Spaulding's insistence on "vision, insight, and will" as the fundamental qualities to be developed in the administrative officer, being characterized as "empty formulae"): and by Dr. Spaulding's prolonged and crushing rejoinder to his critic. A lively academic scrimmage furnishes more or less entertainment to the non-combatants who witness it, but at least one listener would have been satisfied with a much briefer attack and rejoinder.

The really important questions to be answered were what the guiding principles are which, with our present insight, will serve as the basis of profitable experimenting in the organization and administration of public-school systems; how these principles are derived, and how they may be effectively assimilated by the

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neophyte in the field of school supervision and by the experienced principal or superintendent who returns to the university for insight, guidance, and inspiration. All three of the printed papers endeavored to present such principles, or, at least, to make it clear where, in the opinion of the writers, such principles were to be found; and Dr. Spaulding and Professor Elliott presented topical outlines of courses of instruction in which these principles were embodied, in part at least. Dr. Spaulding's paper also suggested the general method whereby these princi-

ples might be assimilated by the student. After pointing out that the facts of organization and administration constitute the only source of the desired principles, and that the three sources of these facts are "his (the student's) own experience of school conditions, his immediate direct observation of schools and their administration, and the literature of the subject," he made the following important suggestion: "Every professor of education who is to give a course in school administration should, if possible, form a limited working partnership with at least one school superintendent, better with several. This partnership should insure to the professor and his students, under whatever restrictions it might be best to impose, access to the administrative center—the thought and motor center—of the school system. From this standpoint, they should carry on continued studies of actual plans and problems of administration with which the superintendent might be occupied." Much study of such "real, concrete, and localized problems of administration," and such study only, can yield the guiding principles, the tone and temper of mind, the broad outlook, the clear insight, and the courageous will that are indispensable to the efficient administrative officer. This clear statement of the difficulties to be solved in giving a university course in school administration, and the fruitful suggestion of the possible solution of many of them, have never before been presented to the assembled professors of education. A cynic, listening to the discussion at the meeting, might have said that most of us were not yet ready to study school administration, much less to give a university course in that subject. The justification of the cynic's view would have been found in the fact that we were apparently looking for the principles of school administration elsewhere than in school administration itself. There was much talk of the sciences—economics, sociology, ethics, philosophy, psychology—from which the administrative officer is to derive guidance and inspiration, and in which, accordingly, the university teacher of school administration is to find the facts and principles which the student is to learn; but there was comparatively little reference to the study of school administration itself as the real source of guidance and inspiration to both professor and student—a point on which Dr. Spaulding had laid special stress. Only one man ventured to give any definite answer to the pointed questions of Professor DeGarmo, who wanted someone to state explicitly what some of the fundamental principles of school administration are. One cannot help sharing the cynic's view, therefore, to some extent, at least. For on further reflection it seems clearer than ever that the way to study school administration is to study school administration, and not to study the social and philosophical sciences, however great the value of a thorough study of these sciences may be—and it is very great—as a preparation for the study of school administration.

P.H.H.